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S T A T E M E N T

BY L.I.BREZHNEV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION AT PLENARY MEETING
OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Helsinki, 31 July 1975

Esteemed Comrade Chairman,

Esteemed participants in the Conference,

Taking part in the final stage of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, we are all conscious of the special nature of this event and its political sweep. It may be confidently said that this feeling is shared by millions upon millions of people in all the countries participating in the Conference, and not only there. They and we together are taking stock of what is happening these days in Finland's capital.

What has made the top political and state leaders present in this hall treat the Conference in such a way?

The answer seems to be that the results of the Conference are linked with expectations and hopes never before engendered by any other collective action in the period following the well-known joint allied post-war decisions.

Those who belong to the generation which lived through the horrors of the Second World War most vividly realize the historic significance of this Conference. Its objectives also appeal to the minds and hearts of the generation of Europeans which has grown and is now living in conditions of peace and which justly believes that things cannot be otherwise.

The soil of Europe was drenched with blood in the years of the two World Wars. The top political and state leaders of 33 European states, of the USA and Canada have assembled in Helsinki to contribute by joint effort to transforming Europe into a continent which would experience no new military calamity. The right to peace must be guaranteed for all the peoples of Europe. We stand, of course, for guaranteeing that right for all the other peoples of our planet as well.

A focal point of multiple and colourful national cultures and one of the peaks of world civilization, Europe is in a position to set a good example of building relations among states on the basis of durable peace.

The Soviet Union regards the results of the Conference not merely as a necessary summing up of the political outcome of the Second World War. This, at the same time, is an insight into the future in terms of the realities of today and of the age-old experience of European nations.

It was here, in Europe, that aggressors time and again adorned themselves with notorious laurels, later only to be cursed by the peoples. It was here, in Europe, that claims to world domination raised to the level of political doctrine ended in the collapse of states whose resources had been made to serve criminal and misanthropic purposes.

That is why the hour has struck for the inevitable collective conclusions to be drawn from the experience of history. And we are drawing these conclusions here, being fully aware of our responsibility for the future of the European continent which must exist and evolve in conditions of peace.

One could hardly deny that the results of the Conference represent a delicately weighed balance of the interests of all participating states and, therefore, should be treated with special care.

Not an easy road has been travelled, from the advancement of the very idea of a European Conference to its culmination--

conclusion at the highest level. The Soviet Union, in assessing soberly the correlation and dynamics of various political forces in Europe and the world, holds a firm conviction that the powerful currents of detente and cooperation on a basis of equality, which in recent years have increasingly determined the course of European and world politics, will gain, thanks to the Conference and its results, a new strength and an even greater scope.

The document we are due to sign, while summing up the past, is oriented, in its content, into the future. The understandings reached cover a wide range of most topical problems--peace, security and cooperation in a multitude of fields.

Relations between the participating states have been placed on the solid basis of fundamental principles which are to determine the rules of behaviour in their relations. They are the principles of peaceful co-existence for which V.I.Lenin, the founder of the Soviet State, fought with such conviction and dedication, and for which our people are fighting even today.

The Conference has defined directions and specific forms of cooperation also in the fields of economy and trade, science and technology, environmental protection, culture, education and contacts between persons, institutions and organisations.

Possibilities of cooperation extend now also to such areas where it was unthinkable in the years of the cold war. For instance, a broader exchange of information in the interests of peace and friendship among nations.

It is no secret that information media can serve the purposes of peace and confidence or they can spread throughout the world the poison of discord between countries and peoples. We would like to hope that the results of the Conference will serve as a correct guideline for cooperation in these areas as well.

The Conference has adopted a number of important arrangements supplementing political detente by military detente. This, too, is a qualitatively new stage in building confidence among states.

The Soviet Union has consistently supported the idea that the Conference should be followed by a further development of military detente. A priority goal in this regard is to find ways to reduce armed forces and armaments in Central Europe without diminishing the security of anyone. On the contrary, to the benefit of all.

The special political importance and moral force of the understandings reached at the Conference reside in the fact that they are to be certified by the signatures of the top leaders of the participating states. To bring those arrangements into full effect is our common and most important objective.

We assume that all countries represented at the Conference will implement the understandings reached. As regards the Soviet Union, it will act precisely in this manner.

In our view, the aggregate result of the Conference is that international detente is being increasingly invested with concrete material content. It is the materialization of detente which is the essence of all that should make peace in Europe truly durable and solid. And here uppermost in our mind is the task of ending the arms race and achieving tangible results in disarmament.

It is highly important to proclaim correct and just principles of relations among states. It is no less important to see to it that these principles are firmly rooted in present-day international relations, are put to practical use and made a law of international life not to be breached by anyone. Such is the aim of our peaceful policy and this is what we declare as well from this rostrum.

Truly, the very meeting of leaders from 33 European states and the USA and Canada, unprecedented in history, should become a key link in the process of detente, of strengthening European and international security and of the development of mutually advantageous cooperation. All that is so.

However, if the hopes of the peoples pinned on this meeting and the decisions of the Conference are to be fully justified, and not frustrated at the first change of weather, further common efforts are required and day-to-day labors of all the participating states to deepen detente.

The success of the Conference has become possible only because the participants continuously took steps to meet each other halfway and managed, after overcoming difficulties, often great ones, to work out, finally, mutually acceptable understandings on each of the issues discussed. These understandings were conceived and reached not through imposition of the views of some Conference participants upon others, but rather on the basis of accommodating the views and interests of all and with general consent.

If there are compromises here, then these compromises are well-grounded, of the kind that benefit peace without obliterating differences in ideology and social system. To be more precise, they are an expression, of the common political will of the participating states in a form that is feasible today, in the conditions of the existence of states with different social systems.

The experience of the work of the Conference provides important conclusions for the future, too. The major one which is reflected in the final document, is this: no one should try to dictate to other peoples, on the basis of foreign policy considerations of one kind or another, the manner in which they ought to manage their internal affairs. It is only the people of each given state, and no one else, that has the sovereign right to resolve its internal affairs and establish its internal laws. A different approach is a flimsy and perilous ground for the cause of international cooperation.

The document that we are to sign is a broad but clear-cut platform to guide unilateral, bilateral and multilateral actions of states in the years and, perhaps, in the decades to come. What has been achieved, however, is not the limit.

Today, it is the maximum of the possible, but tomorrow it should become the starting point for making further headway along the lines mapped out by the Conference.

The urge for continuity in endeavour and deed is inherent in mankind. This is also true of the great enterprise which is now being undertaken by the thirty-five states represented in Helsinki. This has found its reflection in the fact that a follow-up to the first Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has been outlined to implement and expand its objectives.

Before this exceptionally authoritative audience we would like to stress most emphatically one of the inherent features of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, the Leninist policy of peace and friendship among nations--its humanism. The decisions of the 24th Congress of our Party are imbued with the ideas of humanism, as is the Peace Programme, which called, in one of its items, for the convocation of an all-European conference.

We note with deep satisfaction that the provisions elaborated by the Conference on the main problems of strengthening peace in Europe serve the interests of nations, they serve the interests of people regardless of occupation, nationality or age-- industrial and agricultural workers, intellectuals, each person individually and all people together. These provisions are imbued with respect for man and care, so that he would live in peace and look to the future with confidence.

The understandings we have reached expand the possibilities for peoples to increase their influence upon what is called "grand politics". At the same time, they touch upon worldly problems. They will contribute to improving the life of people, providing them with jobs and expanding education opportunities. They are relevant to health care, in short to many things that concern individuals, families, young people and different strata of society.

Like many of those who have spoken from this rostrum, we view the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as a common achievement of all its participants. Its results may be beneficial beyond Europe as well.

The outcome of the prolonged negotiations is such that there are neither victors nor vanquished, winners or losers. It has been a victory of reason. Everyone has won: the countries of East and West, the peoples of socialist and capitalist states, whether parties to alliances or neutral, big or small. It is a gain for all who cherish peace and security on our planet.

We are convinced that a successful implementation of what we have agreed upon here not only will have a beneficial effect on the life of the European peoples, but will also become a major contribution to the cause of strengthening world peace.

And another thought which is, perhaps, shared by many of those present here. The Conference has proved to be a useful school of international politics for the participating states, particularly useful in our time when there exist incredible means of destruction and annihilation.

The powerful impetus provided by this meeting of leaders of thirty-five states participating in the Conference is intended to help everyone in and beyond Europe to live in peace.

In conclusion, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the people and government of Finland and personally to President U.Kekkonen for the excellent organisation of the proceedings of the third stage and for their remarkable warmth and hospitality.